

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00392 291016Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AGRE-00
/100 W

-----020289 291914Z /53

R 290730Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9154
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCOONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO PEKING
AMCONSUL UDORN
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0392

BANGKOK ALSO PASS UDORN ELECTRICALLY

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4 DIMPTD
TAGS: EAID FAO PBOR PINS PDEV SPOP EAGR VM
SUBJECT: A UN OFFICIAL DESCRIBES CONDITIONS IN VIETNAM

SUMMARY: A UN OFFICIAL WHO RETURNED TO VIENTIANE MARCH 18 FROM AN EXTENSIVE THREE WEEK TOUR OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM DESCRIBED TO EMBASSY OFFICERS THE TENSE SITUATION ALONG THE SRV/KAMPUCHEAN BORDER, THE CONTINUING THREAT OF FULRO RESISTANCE GROUPS TO INTERNAL SRV SECURITY, IMPROVING AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY CONDITIONS, AND WORLD FOOD PROGRAM DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING ACCESS TO SOME WFP PROJECT AREAS. END SUMMARY.

1. A HIGH LELEL FAO DELEGATION VISITED THE SRV FROM
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LATE FEBRUARY TO MARCH 18 TO INSPECT ONGOING AND PROSPECTIVE PROJECT SITES. A UN OFFICIAL WHO ACCOMPANIED THE DELEGATION TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT WHILE IN TAY NINH PROVINCE THEY SAW SEVEN VILLAGES THAT HAD BEEN DESTROYED BY KHMER TROOPS (ACCORDING TO VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS). THE SEVEN VILLAGES HAD BEEN PART OF A WORLD FOOD PROGRAM AID PROJECT. THE SOURCE SAID THAT

SECURITY WAS BAD ALL ALONG THE SRV/KAMPUCHEAN BORDER AND THAT THEY FREQUENTLY HEARD LARGE ARTILLERY GUN FIRE AND SPORADIC MACHINE GUN BURSTS. HE SAID THAT JUST BEFORE THE FAO TEAM VISITED THE AREA TWO WESTERN JOURNALISTS NEARLY LOST THEIR LIVES THERE.

2. OUR SOURCE SAID THAT THE DELEGATION VISITED THE DALAT AREA IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS WHERE INTERNAL SECURITY WAS THREATENED BY FULRO RESISTANCE GROUPS. HE SAID THAT LOCAL SRV GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OPENLY ADMITTED THAT FULRO WAS STRONG IN THE AREA AND THAT THE LOCAL POPULATION DEMONSTRATED THEIR ANTIPATHY TO THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND WORKERS WHO HAD RECENTLY COME TO THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGION FROM THE NORTH.

3. OUR SOURCE SAID THAT LARGE GROUPS OF VIETNAMESE FROM THE CENTRAL COASTAL REGIONS HAD ALSO MOVED INTO THE HIGHLANDS REGION.

4. HE ALSO SAID THAT A FORESTRY EXPERT ON THE FAO TEAM DISPUTED THE SRV GOVERNMENT CLAIM THAT ABOUT NINETY PERCENT OF RUBBER TREE PLANTATIONS IN ONE AREA WAS DESTROYED DURING THE WAR. THE FORESTRY EXPERT ESTIMATED THAT ONLY ABOUT 25 PERCENT OF THE RUBBER TREE PLANTATIONS MAY ACTUALLY HAVE BEEN DESTROYED.

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5. THE UN OFFICIAL DESCRIBED THE RICE CROP NOW IN THE FIELDS AS ABUNDANT. ALTHOUGH THE SRV ANTICIPATED A GOOD HARVEST OUR SOURCE SAID THAT THEY WILL STILL REQUEST OVER ONE MILLION TONS OF GRAIN FROM INTERNATIONAL DONORS BECAUSE THEY WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO STORE AT LEAST A FOUR MILLION TON GRAIN RESERVE.

6. THE FAO TEAM VISITED A PROSPECTIVE WFP REFORESTATION SITE NEAR DANANG AND A PROSPECTIVE IRRIGATION PROJECT SITE NORTH OF HUU.

7. THE TEAM FOUND THE HIGHWAY FROM SAIGON TO DANANG IN GOOD CONDITION WITH MOST OF THE BRIDGES RECONSTRUCTED.

8. OUR UN SOURCE COMPLAINED THAT THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM HAD NO EFFECTIVE WAY TO DECIDE END USE OF ITS AID. HE SAID THAT VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PROMISED TO PROVIDE WFP WITH REPORTS ON THE RESULTS OF WFP AID PROJECTS BUT THAT WFP OFFICIALS WERE NOT PERMITTED TO TRAVEL OR CONDUCT THEIR OWN INVESTIGATIONS FREELY. HE SAID THAT REQUESTS BY THE FAO DELEGATION TO GO TO SPECIFIC AREAS NOT ON THE AGENDA WERE USUALLY DENIED FOR

"SECURITY REASONS". HE SUSPECTED THAT THOSE LOCAL
PEOPLE AND OFFICIALS WHOM THEY WERE PERMITTED TO INTER-
VIEW HAD RECEIVED PROIR COACHING FROM THE NORTHERN
OFFICIALS ON THEIR RESPONSES TO THE DELEGATION'S
QUESTIONS.
MCWILLIAMS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARAMILITARY FORCES, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, FORESTRY, BORDER INCIDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978VIENTI00392
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X4 DIMPTD
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780136-0855
Format: TEL
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780311/aaaaajao.tel
Line Count: 122
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4b9624b9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3126932
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: A UN OFFICIAL DESCRIBES CONDITIONS IN VIETNAM SUMMARY: A UN OFFICIAL WHO RETURNED TO VIENTIANE MARCH 18 FROM AN EXTENSIVE THREE WEEK TOUR OF THE SOC IAL
TAGS: E AID, P B O R, P I N S, P D E V, S P O P, E A G R, E P A P, V M, F A O
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4b9624b9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014